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SECURITY INFORMATION

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

16 May 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

**SUBJECT: Likelihood of Early Soviet Action against Berlin in
Response to the Signing of the EDC and Contractual
Accords**

1. Current Situation. As part of its campaign to prevent West German integration with the West, the USSR has launched a program of threats and intimidation. These threats have so far issued primarily from the puppet East German government, while the USSR has remained in the background. A logical focal point for any such Soviet/East German pressure tactics is the exposed Western position in Berlin.

2. Soviet/GDR Capabilities. The Communists have the capability not only sharply to increase the harassment by such means as Communist demonstrations in the Western sectors, interference with traffic between Berlin and the Western zones, etc., but to institute at any time a ground blockade. Moreover, since 1948 the Communists have almost completed rail and canal by-passes around the Western sectors of Berlin, thus reducing Communist vulnerability to Western retaliatory action.

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3. Aside from its capabilities for ground blockade, the USSR is probably capable of jamming Western navigation aids on the air corridors to Berlin and thus seriously interfering with any airlift, perhaps leading Western aircraft to inadvertently fly outside the corridors and expose themselves to Soviet action. We estimate that the USSR has the capability, if it chooses to run the risk, of eventually making the Allied position in Berlin untenable through a ground blockade plus jamming of navigational aids.

4. It is conceivable that the USSR could attempt to stage a quick coup in Berlin by flooding the Western sectors with groups of East Berliners together with units of the Alert Police who would attempt to seize control and present the West with a fait accompli. We do not believe the USSR could now carry out such a coup or overrun Berlin before Allied forces could react.

5. Indications. Aside from the recent threatening statements of GDR leaders, there are no firm indications of Soviet intentions.

6. Probable Soviet Intentions. Undoubtedly the USSR intends eventually to eliminate the Allied outpost behind the Iron Curtain in Berlin. We believe, however, that the USSR is at present concerned with the larger objective of forestalling the Allied integration

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program and that any Soviet decision would depend primarily upon the Kremlin's assessment of the extent to which increased pressures on Berlin would further this basic objective. We believe (and recent GDR threats would indicate) that the USSR and its East German puppets would react in some manner to the signature of the EDC and contractual accords. We estimate that one Soviet reaction will be further threats and intensified harassing actions in Berlin including new interference with Western trade or traffic and Communist demonstrations in the Western sectors.

7. At the same time, we believe that the USSR probably would not go so far as to reinstitute an early blockade of Berlin. Before taking such a drastic step, the Kremlin would have to reckon that this step would frighten the West Germans and the Western Powers into postponing further steps in their program and into opening four-power negotiations on German unity on terms favorable to the USSR. We do not believe the USSR, with the experience of the 1948 blockade in mind, would consider that a renewed blockade would have these effects. We believe, rather, that the Kremlin would consider that the Western Powers, despite much hesitation within their ranks, would refuse to negotiate under duress, and that [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] such pressure would not have an adverse effect on West

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German determination to proceed with rearmament plans. We believe that the Kremlin would recognize that its present appeal to German unity sentiment would be jeopardized by such strong pressure tactics, and that such tactics might actually hasten the fulfillment of the Western program by reinforcing German scepticism as to the USSR's peaceful intentions.

8. In our belief, moreover, the USSR considers that it still has ample time before ratification of the Allied-German accords to exploit further its theme of German unity and that it can still lead the Western Powers into protracted negotiations without the necessity of a blockade.

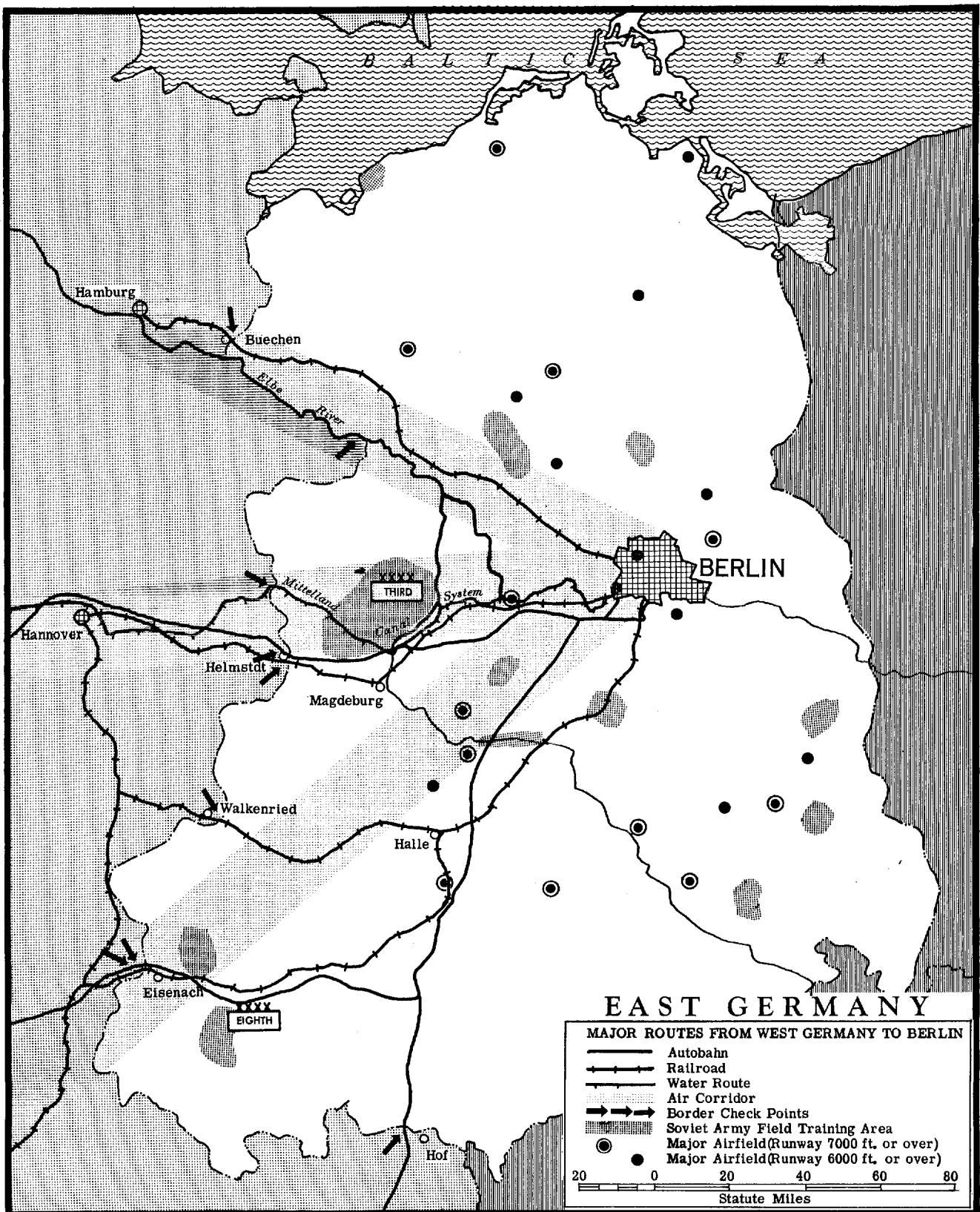
9. Finally, we do not believe the USSR would at present be willing to run the risk of general war which it must consider would result from a blockade, particularly if such a blockade included interdiction of the air corridors to Berlin.

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